

# Septuagint

Bryan Lawrence (He/Him)

Hi, my name is Bryan Lawrence, I use masculine pronouns, and I am going to present on the Septuagint. I will begin the presentation by explaining what the Septuagint is, then I will provide some history and background. I will finish up the presentation by explaining why all of this is important for our studies during this semester.

To put it in simple terms, the Septuagint is everything that was included in the *Septuaginta*. This is the entire range of books found but specifically speaking, the Septuagint is the old Greek version of the Bible. It includes translation of all the books that were found in the Old Testament, and this makes the Septuagint the first known Bible translation. Leonard Greenspoon wrote, “that anyone who seeks to understand the New Testament must take into account its considerable debt to the Septuagint.”

Moving on, I'll provide a little bit of history. The letter of Aristeas traces the Septuagint's origins back to Alexandria, Egypt during Ptolemy Philadelphus the second's reign. This document actually turns out to be an eyewitness account of a series of events where Ptolemy instructs a high priest from Jerusalem to send 72 Jewish elders that were skilled in languages to the royal court at Alexandria in order to provide a Greek translation of the Torah.

Now that number 70 is actually very important here because that's where the name of the book comes from. There were six translators taken from each of the 12 tribes and this equals 72 translators. The number of translators has been tallied anywhere from 70-72 but it's standard abbreviation (LXX) means 70 as well as 'Septuagint'.

Now, why is all of this important? So, according to Aristeas in that letter, he writes that the Alexandrian Jewish community went as far as to put a curse on anyone who would make even the slightest change to this Greek text. This just shows how important this script became to everyone in that community but it also allows others

to study the teachings of the Old Testament from Greek Orthodox and other churches. These translations allowed the teachings to spread outside of Greece and into many different areas of the world. This was huge in terms of attracting new people to the religion. Another important aspect to consider is that the translators of the Septuagint made sure to include several major differences between this text and the Masoretic Text. The discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls in the 1900s provides a text very similar to the one translated in the Septuagint. Lastly, I'd like to leave all of you with a quote from Leonard Greenspoon which really stuck with me when reading about the Septuagint. He writes, "The composers (of the Septuagint) were, as Philo maintained, authentic prophets rather than mere translators."